How Little Dell De Forrest Was Made Insane by Constantly Smoking Cigarettes.

The Whirlwind Dancer Now in an Asylum.

She Smoked and Smoked Cigarettes Night and Day Until at Last the Poison Reached Her Brain.

To the Editor of the Journal.

The case of this woman, Dell De Forrest, presents some very interesting conditions. She is in the asylum, having been duly adjudged insane. The cause of her dementia is given as excessive cigarette smoking. It is quite sure that the woman was addicted to the habit to an extent that was unusual, and her mental condition is undoubtedly due as much to this as to any other cause. I am told that the woman smoked continuously, and it is therefore probable that her entire system was saturated with nicotine. The direct result of the use of tobacco to such an extent is to put the brain in a lethargic condition. The poison acts as directly as alcohol taken in excess does. I cannot go into the details of this woman's case with propriety. Cases of insanity in which nicotine poisoning figures as an important factor are quite frequent. Every physician is called upon during his practice to minister to nervous wrecks whose condition is due to tobacco.

These were not considered incurable. I have met with many cases of insanity in which the abuse of tobacco entered. In fact, after a few weeks' treatment the patients have been restored to nervous and mental vigor. All physicians recognize the evil effects of excess in the use of this narcotic. Its toxic effects are well known. A total derangement of the nervous system leads up to the loss of mental power. There are in the De Forrest case many complications. She is said to have mourned much over her husband's conduct. Her hours have been irregular. Her daily work was violent in its nature. She may have had other appetites that she indulged to excess. It is known, however, that she was a slave to tobacco, which she used immoderately, and in the diagnosis of the case the examining authorities have very properly put down cigarettes as the promoting cause of her insanity.

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Who sows the wind must reap the whirlwind.

Here is the story of a young woman who began by sowing the whirlwind. She went the pace a little faster than the average, but her fate was the same as that of the more timid ones who descend mildly.

Dell De Forrest, a beautiful young woman, whose physical charms were familiar to all who frequented the New York theatres a few years ago, is to-day an inmate of the State Asylum for the Insane on Blackwell's Island. Her malady is incurable. She raves and cries and fills the air with her imprecations and her lamentations.

Sometimes she becomes violent, and rigorous measures have to be taken to save her from herself. Her mind is a pitiful wreck, and the cause of it all was the smoking of cigarettes.

Dell De Forrest was a slave to the cigarette habit. From morning to night hardly a moment passed in which she was not puffing at a cigarette. Frequently she would smoke a dozen in rapid succession, and there was hardly a day when she consumed less than seventy-five.

Do you remember the Whirlwind Dancers? They were husband and wife, who for more than a year delighted lovers of vaudeville with one of the most bewildering and eccentric dances that ever appeared upon a stage. The woman was exceedingly pretty, and her movements as she slid and jumped and whirled around with her partner were full of grace. Her eyes—you will remember this if you ever saw her—were remarkably brilliant and expressive, and in her whole appearance there was an air of queenliness rare enough upon the vaudeville stage to be striking.

This was Dell De Forrest, and only a year ago the whole town was placarded with notices of the Whirlwind Dance. How quickly the town forgets.

Dell De Forrest—her real name is Dell Cline—was born in New York City twenty-six years ago. Her parents were good but rather straight-laced people, who did all they could to keep their daughter out of harm's way. She received an excellent education in the public schools, and afterward in college, but unlike most girls brought up as she was she evinced no desire to escape from parental dominion and see something of life for herself.

As a matter of fact, for several years after she had finished her studies she spent most of her days at home, leading a quiet and most exemplary life and having not the slightest desire to change her surroundings. Then one day she calmly upset the household with the information that she had made up her mind to go upon the stage.

She had been attracted to the stage by what she had read more than by what she had seen. She knew very little about it, and had not sufficient strength of mind to profit by what she learned.

There was a man named Jones who, under the stage name of De Forrest, was playing in the small variety halls of Newark. His specialty was an eccentric dance, not very pretty or ingenious, but rather above the average of what the music halls of Newark then offered. Dell Cline met him, asked him to teach her to dance, and fell in love with him.

Together they invented the famous Whirlwind Dance. It was an immediate success, and for the first time in her life Dell Cline, or, as she now called herself, Dell De Forrest, had it in her power to gratify her every wish. After travelling from town to town for several months the De Forrests were engaged as a special attraction by the Boston Howard Athenæum Company, one of the leading variety shows of the country. Here they received a salary of $300 a week, which was divided equally between them. Her share of it—$150 a week—was more than she had ever dreamed of possessing in this world, and it turned her head.

First came late suppers with champagne; then came more champagne; then came cigarettes, and then a dozen other different forms of dissipation, which, in short order, began to leave their traces upon her. Her husband—she had married De Forrest—and her friends pleaded with her to abandon her furious pace, and, yielding to their appeals, she stopped drinking and gave up all her dissipated habits save smoking. Cigarette smoking, she said, had become part of her nature.

The habit had taken a tremendous hold upon her. Morning, noon and night she was found with a cigarette between her lips.

In a letter to her mother written about this time she refers to tobacco as her only friend. The nicotine seemed to have a sedative effect upon her nerves in the beginning, because she had first taken to the habit as a means of allaying nervousness. After a while its stimulating effects made themselves felt. Whenever she became depressed she wanted to smoke. When she was happy she wanted to smoke. In fact, at all times and under all circumstances she wanted to smoke.

Her husband is largely to blame for her nicotine excesses at this period. She was a woman of sensitive temperament, and his attentions to other women frequently drove her into the depths of jealous despair. It was upon such occasions, or when her husband had failed to come home for several days in succession, that she indulged in the violent cigarette sprees that finally deranged her mind.

It came to such a pass that she could not sleep through the night without her cigarette. At certain hours she would awake, light a cigarette that she had kept at hand, take a few puffs, and then relapse into slumber. After a while the waking spells became more frequent and the duration of each nap became shorter, so that, a few months ago, she never slept more than half or three-quarters of an hour at a time.

Upon the stage she became utterly unreliable. Frequently she would keep performers and audience alike waiting until she could run to her dressing room and take a few puffs of a cigarette. The poison soon showed its effects. Her brain became lethargic, her appetite became capricious, and she grew weak. She was seized with permanent melancholia and seemed always to be plunged in deepest gloom. Her mind became abstracted; she could never fix her attention upon a matter for more than a moment or two at a time.

At the advice of her physician she was removed to a private sanitarium at Stamford. There she became worse and was sent to the Amityville Insane Asylum. She had hardly been there two days when she was seized with the delusion that the asylum attendants were attempting to poison her. From that moment this poor creature's life has been filled with the most horrible delusions that could spring from a disordered brain.

She refused to accept food, and they had to force nourishment down her throat. Then she became possessed of the delusion that Dr. Williams, the head of the institution, was in love with her, and after that she accepted food from him, but from no one else.

One night, while thinking of her husband, she was seized with the idea that he was a prisoner in the room over hers. She took a slat from her bed, stood on a chair, and pounded the plaster overhead until she had made a big hole in the ceiling, to the alarm of the other patients in the ward. It was inadvisable to keep her in the asylum any longer, and Dr. Williams decided to request her mother to remove her.

Her relatives obtained a commitment to the insane asylum on Blackwell's Island, and there, early last week, they took her. Her removal was accomplished with the utmost difficulty. She had the delusion that Dr. Williams was to have married her, but had been kidnapped by his family. Dr. Williams's sister and one of the physicians of the asylum accompanied her to Blackwell's Island.

When they alighted from the train at Long Island City their patient became so violent that it required the united efforts of three policemen to overcome her. Finally her struggles grew fainter, and they were able to take her to the Island without further difficulty.

In the insane asylum on Blackwell's Island, unlike private sanitariums, the whims and depraved appetites of the inmates are not gratified unless it is absolutely necessary for the preservation of their health that it should be done. Dell de Forrest began to cry for cigarettes. They refused to allow her to smoke.

She begged, pleaded, implored, threatened, raged and burst into floods of profanity again and again and again, but they would give her no cigarettes.

"Oh, my God!" she would cry, in her agony, "why wont you give me a cigarette? Just one—only one! Please, please, please! Wont you, doctor? Wont you, nurse? Only one! Only give me a puff! For the love of God give me a puff of a cigarette! I'll die if you don't give me one puff—oh, just one little puff!"

For hours she will cry like this, and finally, excited beyond endurance, she will shriek and scream and tear her hair in impotent rage until, from sheer weakness, she falls exhausted upon her cot. Then, when the fit has passed, she will arise and smooth her hair, array herself in her neatest clothes, and, with a smile on her lips, will sway gently to and fro for a few moments, humming a melody which she knows well. The melody grows louder and louder, faster and faster, and she has begun to dance around and around with graceful and easy steps. Then, while the other unfortunates look on in wonderment, Dell de Forrest passes out of her room and dances the Whirlwind Dance up and down the ward.

HEAT AND LIGHT STORAGE

This Is One of the Great Problems with Which Science Is Called Upon to Deal.

One of the great problems of the age is the storage of light. Nature is lavish with her benefits, but not at all regular in her bestowal of them. She overwhelms us with them when we have plenty, and withholds her hand when we are in dire need.

That is the way with her supply of water, food, light, heat—in fact, of almost every necessity of life. Hence the need of collecting during a season of abundance and holding over for a season of deficiency. In the case of water supply we do this pretty well, and so with food; but with light and heat we are only beginners.

The reason is that light and heat cannot be advantageously stored in the shape of light and heat; they must first be turned into other forms and turned back again when we want to use them. Thus, the surplus light and heat of the sun were turned into chemical energy in coal thousands of years ago, and we are getting them back again to-day in the shape of light and heat again—as heat directly, as light through the interposition of electric energy.

When the coal supply gives out we shall have to use the solar energy more directly, perhaps by some form of solar engine, like Ericsson's. But all these transformations are wasteful, and the fewer of them the better.

Some recent experiments made in France and described before the Paris Academy of Sciences by M. Charles Henry, one of the famous "Henry Brothers," opens an interesting vista toward a possible means of storing up light directly in the future, without turning any of it into either heat energy or electrical energy. M. Henry proposes to make use of the property of certain phosphorescent substances of absorbing light that falls upon them, and giving it out again in the dark.

The familiar "luminous paint" is an example. Of course, these substances do not truly "absorb" the light. The light causes in them some obscure change, and when this ceases they begin to change back to the original state, becoming luminous in the process. However this may be, we have a much more direct transformation of light than any other we know. The only problem is to get it under control; to store it up as we do water, so that we can have it, as it were, on tap.

At present a phosphorescent substance must shine as long as there is any "shine" in it; we cannot stop it or start it.

Now, it has been known for some time that heat will increase and hasten this phosphorescent action, and it occurred to M. Henry that, on the contrary, cold ought to lessen and stop it. This is found by experiment to be the case. By a careful regulation of the temperature, the phosphorescent light is held exactly under control. It may be kept "bottled up" in the phosphorescent substance for as long a time as desired, and then caused to shine out.

This discovery, as M. Henry admits, is not likely to lead at once to anything very practical. To have at one's command any desired temperature involves, in the present state of knowledge, a continual expenditure of energy. Indeed, it costs more to get a very low temperature than a very high one, and great cold is not at every one's disposal short of the Arctic regions.

From a purely scientific point of view, however, this discovery of a means for the storage of light is of the highest importance, and it will hardly do to assert in such an age as this that some twist or other of the next inventor's ingenuity will not cast it headlong into the domain of the practical.

Not the least interesting thing about it is the fact that the means commonly used to preserve food, namely, extreme cold, may also be used to control and keep for use so immaterial a thing as luminous, radiant energy—it is cold storage in both cases.

THE POISONOUS CITY.

Figures That Show How a Great City's Atmosphere Is Disease Laden.

An eminent French scientist, Dr. Miquel, has published some remarkable information on the composition of the dust of Paris. He shows that it is charged with disease germs. As Paris is a notably clean city, we may assume that figures no less alarming would be applicable to New York.

He divides the dust into three classes: The inorganic, including iron, salt, ammonia, etc.; the non-reproductive, including pollen, cotton fibre, etc.; the reproductive, including microbes, bacteria and products of putrid fermentation.

In Montsouris, a prosperous and distant suburb of Paris, he finds the number of microbes in a cubic yard of air to be 275, while in the centre of Paris it is 6,040. The number in the air of the suburb has been steadily decreasing year by year, while that in the city air has been rapidly rising.

"These terrible enemies," he writes, "are all the more fearful because we know them to be invisible. Like the ghosts of olden times, they infest the world, enter our houses, hide in the hangings, creep into our clothes, nourish themselves on our tissues, steal the best of our blood, and spread through our bodies the subtle poison of their injurious secretions."

The human body contains millions of microbes, for the most part harmless. M. Remlinger, a surgeon of the Val de Grace Hospital, in Paris, has made an interesting calculation respecting the number of microbes left by patients in their baths:

Not having taken a bath for	No. of Microbes.
3 weeks	1,068,000,000
15 days	684,000,000
10 days	684,000,000
15 days	588,000,000
9 days	396,000,000
1 month	1,212,000,000
12 days	516,000,000
6 weeks	1,116,000,000
16 days	636,000,000
1 month	828,000,000

It will be noted that, as a general rule, the longer a man neglects a bath the more microbes he has.

HUMAN LEATHER.

Parisian Faddists Are Now Binding Books in the Skins of Criminals.

It is nothing more than a fad, of course, but it is one of those abnormally developed fads which include in its following nearly every one in Paris who wishes to be called "smart." Men and women high in Parisian society have fallen victims to whatever attractiveness the fad may have.

The method at first was to obtain a piece of the skin of a departed friend. This is tanned and then turned over to the bookbinder. Sometimes it is merely inserted in the cover, but in several cases where the skin has been sufficiently large it has served in place of the leather back of the volume.

From a modest start with the sentiment, however morbid it may have been, implied by having the skin of one's friends preserved, the fad has taken a peculiar turn. The proper thing at this period is to have the skin taken from some notorious criminal. To do this necessarily involves a series of pulls with the public officials.

The bodies after execution are sent to the Ecole de Medecine, and it is not impossible to get a desired piece of skin by a liberal dispensation of money.

A Parisian journalist has in his possession a cigarette case made out of the skin of the notorious Pranzini. Tobacco pouches and pocketbooks are displayed by their proud possessors made of the skin of some criminal who has paid the penalty of his crimes.

The idea of using human skin for pocketbooks is not confined entirely to the Parisians. New York medical students are nursing a fad along this line. The skin used by the local devotees seldom has any morbid history beyond the fact that it is human skin. It is taken from the cadavers turned over to the medical colleges for dissection, and there is neither secrecy nor danger of detection in getting it.